

First Choice Homes Oldham Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy - Vale House

February 2026

MONITORING, APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Lead Officer / Author	Alex Swift – Fire Safety Manger
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Version Notes	To align review dates with other HRB resident engagement strategies, update based on CVP feedback, update based on BDO Building safety audit
Publication	To be published internally and externally.
Consultation	V1 December 2024 (Original) - Fire Management Group V2 February 2026 - Fire Management Group, Customer Voice Panel
Equality Analysis	

Policy Review	The Strategy will be reviewed every 2 years or in line with legislative or regulatory changes or, following a mandatory occurrence or completion of significant works. On review the appropriateness of methods of participation is considered and any changes or improvements reflected in the next published version. This is reviewed (and records documented) by key stakeholders as part of the Building Safety Management Meeting (BSMG) by way of circulation of an information paper. Where appropriate, it's also sent to our Customer Voice Panel (CVP) for feedback. Version records are held within the Property Safety Teams files. Due February 2028
Electronic File Location	FCHO Hub and FCHO Website S:/FCHO Shared/hsg-general/Policy, Strategy and Assurance/Current Policies
Copy available from	Corporate Support

FCHO Building Safety Engagement Strategy

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1.0 Version details

Version	V.2.0
Sponsor :	Executive director of homes
Owner :	Head of Property Safety
Sign off :	Executive Leadership Team
Timescale :	2026-2028
Review date :	February 2028

2.0 Introduction and objectives

This is First Choice Homes Oldham's Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy. It focuses on Vale House, a High-Rise Residential Building (HRB), although many of the principles will apply to other buildings. The strategy sets out our approach to resident engagement relating to Vale House from 2026-2028 and should be considered the continued path towards meaningful engagement with residents about the safety of their homes.

This strategy has been developed with our residents' input. Residents were consulted through our Customer Voice Panel (CVP) whereby a sample group of residents have the opportunity to question, make changes and develop the strategy. Having residents' involvement makes the strategy more meaningful and provides residents with knowledge and understanding around the benefits of resident engagement and how this improves their own and their family's safety.

Any significant changes or development to the strategy are signed off through FCHO's internal Building Safety Management Group (BSMG) and the Customer Voice Panel. Minor changes are circulated as information papers through BSMG

The key aims of this strategy are to:

- Identify the customer profile of those living in Vale House
- Detail our approach to engaging and involving residents in relation to building safety in Vale House
- Ensure residents are empowered to play an effective role in ensuring their building is, and continues to be safe
- Set out the ways in which residents can get involved and the benefits to them from participating in engagement on building safety
- Identify the building safety information residents will be provided with
- Identify the way in which residents will be provided with building safety information
- Establish methods of improving our approach to engaging with residents in relation to the safety of their home
- Engage staff with regards to importance of residents' rights to have a say in relation to their homes

- Clarify our responsibilities and residents' responsibilities to ensure their homes remain safe
- Ensure we are communicating to residents around any proposed building safety works taking place

The Strategy will be reviewed at maximum every 2 years or as part of FCHO's implementation of the Building Safety legislation or as changes in regulation or legislation comes in, reviews will also follow any mandatory occurrence or completion of significant works and in response to any issues or clarity required by the Building Safety Regulator.

3.0 Internal and external context

Following the tragedy at Grenfell in June 2017, the Government commissioned the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety led by Dame Judith Hackitt which was published in May 2018. In December 2018 the Government accepted all 53 of her recommendations.

We established an internal working group to implement the applicable recommendations which was called the Fire Management Group (FMG) now called Building Safety Management Group (BSMG). A large emphasis has been placed on how landlords engage with residents around building safety and this strategy outlines the approach we will take to engage with and involve residents in the safety of their homes.

In June 2019 the Government published a consultation document setting out how they plan to overhaul the system for high rise residential buildings through:

- Clearer responsibilities for those building or managing these buildings
- A stronger voice in the system and better information for residents
- Greater oversight by regulators; and
- Tougher enforcement when things go wrong

The Building Safety Act and Fire Safety England Regulations are now fully embedded, both of which place an emphasis on engaging with our residents. First Choice Homes Property Safety team are continually reviewing the legislation and implementing this as well as best practice to further engage with our residents.

4.0 Our approach

The following section outlines our approach to engaging with residents around building safety. There are four main strands:

1. Information and understanding
2. Resident and landlords' responsibilities
3. Action to take in the event of a fire (evacuation strategy)
4. Staff training

4.1 Information and understanding

Ways residents can communicate with us:

- Email - propertysafetyteam@FCHO.co.uk
- Online – <https://www.First Choice Homes Oldham.co.uk/contact-us>
- 'My account'
- By phone – 0161 393 7117
- By post – First Choice Homes Oldham, Tellus, First Place, 22 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1BE
- In person – First Place, 22 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1BE
- Social Media - via direct message on Facebook or X

Ways FCHO communicate with residents:

- In person
- Email
- Phone
- Text message
- Website
- My Account
- Social media – Facebook, X, Instagram
- Direct mail/letters
- Information leaflets & similar materials
- Advertising
- Partners' communications channels e.g. Oldham Council
- TV screens in foyer

Building safety communications

Evacuation policy

A 'stay safe' poster is displayed in the lift foyer at the main entrance. This details the evacuation strategy for their block, this information is also posted through each residents door annually and is provided on sign up of any new tenants.

Fire Safety Advice

Fire safety advice is posted annually through each residents door to help them understand what they can do to help keep the building safe. FCHO also have lots of useful fire safety information published on its website, this is regularly updated to ensure its up to date and relevant.

Face to face engagement

FCHO employ a Property Safety Compliance Officer who visits each HRB at least once a month. A new Officer has been appointed and will be in post February 2026. On each visit, a sample of flats are accessed, we strive to ensure all flats are accessed at least annually. During these visits the following is carried out:

- Flat entrance door check (under Fire safety England Regulations)
- Check other fire safety systems within their flats (detection, EVAC and sprinklers).
- Generally, look at fire safety hazards
- Speak with the occupants of all flats completing a standard questionnaire, this includes – Collecting data for the fire service in relation to vulnerabilities (which is included in the Premise Information Box PIB). Asking each resident 'Are there any building safety concern in your block' this give each resident the opportunity to raise any concerns face to face to a member of the fire safety team, who has the knowledge to be able to respond or deal with any requests. We also check residents are aware of how they can report concerns outside of these visits.

Having a single person provides residents with a familiar face who they can raise any building safety concerns and the confidence that these will be dealt with and updates can be provided back to each resident. Safety concerns raised by residents are a standard agenda item within the BSMG.

Fire Safety Campaigns

FCHO promote fire safety campaigns developed both internally and by GMFRS. These campaigns are communicated through various channels. FCHO will continue to promote fire safety campaigns as provided by partners Greater Manchester Fire and rescue Service. FCHO also send out annual seasonal letters around current issues that affect (or could affect) the residents in Vale House. This includes promotion on social media

- Annual Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) letter explaining purpose of the FRA
- Providing fire safety advice
- Annual reminder of the evacuation strategy

Sharing fire safety information with residents

- We publish a summary of all current Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) for our HRBs (as well as a summary of the status of each FRA action) on our website. This is regularly updated to reflect works done previously and provide target dates of any outstanding works. All letters sent out to residents in HRBs invite them to contact us for copies of the FRA should they wish to receive one.
- We publish a summary of each HRB on the Building safety page of our website. Ensuring residents can feel assured that the comprehensive range of fire safety equipment is regularly checked and FCHO remain compliant with legislation
- We aim to provide information in formats for residents who are disabled or do not speak English as their first language. Vulnerable residents will also be able to nominate a representative who can request information on their behalf. If there is something we have not provided, residents can ask for further information about safety measures in their buildings if they wish
- FCHO send out regular written communication to its residents of HRBs relating to either specific issues with individual flats or the block neighbourhood. FCHO have a suit of standard template letters, any new issues identified will have new letter template developed as they are identified
- When planning or commissioning any large-scale investment works in relation to building safety, FCHO write to its residents of HRBs outlining what's been done, why its been done, timescale of any project and any relevant advice

- Where building safety works are taking place for a period of more than one day that will limit access to any part of a building, or otherwise cause a nuisance to residents, FCHO will consult with its residents dates times and anticipated disruption. This would include any major works. Examples of known future building safety works include the planned refurbishment of bin stores, quarterly audible testing of EVAC system, structural assessment
- FCHO give residents training opportunities should they wish to expand their knowledge of fire safety and how they can contribute to the building's safety. This is offered on fire safety communications sent out by FCHO fire safety team
- Mandatory occurrence reporting – residents are made aware of how to report building safety issues, this is discussed and recorded as part of annual visits with specific question around 'do you know how to report a building safety issue, guidance will be issued where resident do not understand
- When FCHO put in place new processes or introduce new policy, FCHO engage with its Customer Voice Panel (CVP). The CVP are residents of FCHO properties (not necessarily Vale House) that give customer insight and provide valuable feedback into these proposals. FCHO can then ensure we best encompass the needs our residents (based on feedback) as well as meeting our own legislative obligations

Providing feedback and consultations to our residents and colleagues

Where residents share concerns and views are raised, we consider these and timely feedback is provided. The main source of engagement with our residents is through the annual face to face visits. Any issues or concerns raised will firstly be considered by the Property Safety Officer and where applicable information provided to the resident to alleviate their concerns. Where the answer is not readily available, or work is required (either physical or by another team) these concerns are recorded as a non-compliant visit on our software system Propeller this allows these to be easily identified.

Any non-compliant visits are discussed as part of the standard agenda item in the BSMG. Issues raised that pose a safety concern or a breach of legislation are addressed directly by the fire safety team within timescales mirroring those in FRAs (based on the risk presented). Where more complex issues are identified, or significant budgets are required this is taken to the Building Safety Management Group which is held every 3 months. Feedback is provided to the

customer following this internal meeting. Customers would be notified that their concerns have been taken to the Building Safety Management Group as consultation is required

FRAs are shared with customers online, the action summary is updated each month with the current position and an expected target date to get works completed. This keeps the resident informed that we are dealing with any recommended actions.

FCHO have in place a mandatory reporting policy, FCHO will ensure that responses to issues raised use simple language and are in a format which the complainant can understand. As per legislation, if the criteria for mandatory reporting is met then FCHO will submit a Mandatory Occurrence Reporting notice and report to the Building Safety Regulator within 10 days of the safety occurrence being identified. Feedback would be provided to the resident within the same timeframe.

A response will:

- Address all of the issues that were raised
- Provide reasons for any decisions made
- Detail actions that have been carried out or are planned, with time frames when these will be completed

On issuing any communication to our residents, FCHO provide contacts for further information. This is given on Annual fire safety advice, seasonal letters, fire safety campaigns. These are reported through to the fire safety team who will deal with the request or where more complex issues are identified, or significant budgets are required this would be taken to the Building Safety Management Group (held every 3 months). Feedback would be provided to the resident following.

Where Vale House is to undergo any major works or significant decisions affecting building safety, where applicable, consultation will take place with residents to allow their views to be heard and considered by FCHO. Residents would be lettered explaining the proposal, why FCHO are carrying out the works as well as detail around contractors and timings.

For any major works FCHO contractors would appoint a dedicated Tennant Liaison officer (TLO), they visit and establish relationships with residents building up that rapport to provide meaningful two way consultation. Where applicable consultation events are held inviting residents to speak with FCHO staff, contractors as well as other residents within the block. These are usually offered

at varying times to ensure that the majority of residents have the opportunity to attend. Resident consultation took place prior to the commencement of the fire safety programme, the consultation invited views of residents and influenced decisions made on the programme as well as improving engagement as residents were informed as to what was going on.

Regular visits from the FCHO property Safety Officer - The Property Safety Officer is known to most residents and is fully aware of building safety within Vale House, this allows an avenue for informal consultation around building safety that can be followed up and fed back.

Any future significant building safety decisions will

- Be communicated in writing to each resident
- Be displayed on the TV monitor in the main entrance
- (Where applicable) Go through consultation at our customer voice panel
- (Where applicable) a consultation event will be arranged
- Discussions with property Safety officer during visits

Reporting resident engagement performance internally within FCHO is key to ensure business oversight into resident engagement activities. Having oversight will strengthen governance and aid effective decision making. A 'HRB resident engagement summary report' will be provided each quarter and circulated to FCHO Building Safety Group, whereby it monitors progress on face to face engagement, highlights concerns raised and documents the various engagement activities undertaken through the year (Appendix A)

4.2 Customer profile at Vale House

Understanding our customers within our blocks can help us more meaningfully engage with them. Vale House consists of 62 affordable rent apartments. Engagement with residents in this block is still in its infancy (new build April 2025), the familiarity of the fire safety team over the last 8 months has started to build up good relationships with the customers.

Fire Safety Officers are present the block monthly and their continued presence has ensured these relationships continue to flourish with these customers. Any visits are planned in advance notice is given (as well as regular reminders) in order to increase our chances of access.

Vale House is designed for general needs. As residents age or due to other circumstances, they may not be able to evacuate easily. We keep up to date records of any vulnerabilities that may prevent residents following evacuation advice. We collect data on customers during annual visits and update the

Premise Information Box (PIB) box so the fire service can assist in evacuation if required.

At the time of updating this strategy (February 2026) there is 1 apartment which is classified as having residents that are vulnerable, classified as 'Person requiring rescue or evacuation by 2 or less fire-fighters with no additional equipment required e.g. visual impairment, hearing impairment or cognitive impairment but mobile. As part of our continued improvement and in preparation for The Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025 this customer has been offered person centred risk assessment, which has been undertaken and an emergency evacuation statement provided. Any further residents identified as vulnerable would follow this same process.

4.3 Resident and landlord responsibilities

Supporting residents and landlords to understand their responsibilities

Building safety is the responsibility of both the residents and the landlord. It is important that residents work with us by telling us any safety concerns which will be treated seriously and acted upon.

Landlords' responsibilities:

- Varying monthly, annually and quarterly building safety inspections
- Act appropriately on the recommendations and actions identified in the Fire Risk Assessments carried out
- Work with the fire service to provide information they require, promote their safety campaigns and look into any fire safety concerns raised
- Provide information to residents on all aspects of fire safety and provide opportunity to obtain more information for those residents who wish.
- Act appropriately on any concerns made by residents and ensuring they receive a response to their concerns. FCHO also have a complaint policy to ensure there is an alternative avenue for residents to raise complaints should they feel FCHO have not addressed
- Feedback to resident following any issues raised to provide assurance that we are acting on what's been raised
- Involve residents in the initial stages of any large scale planned works (customer consultation)
- A mandatory occurrence reporting process has been established to ensure where residents raise concerns they can be investigated, remedied and reported to the Building Safety Regulator (where applicable)

Resident responsibilities:

- To provide access to their homes for us to undertake safety inspections or fire and structural safety maintenance
- To not store possessions in communal areas in line with our communal areas policy
- Identifying and reporting hazards, including reminding neighbours of building safety information if they are not adhering to this
- Inform us of any disability, (temporary or permanent) so we can ensure we can keep the fire service updated for the unlikely event of an assisted evacuation being needed

4.4 Action to take in the event of a fire (evacuation strategy)

Vale House operates a 'stay put' evacuation strategy. FCHO ensure that the evacuation strategy for Vale House is clearly communicated to its residents. FCHO use literature designed by our partners at GMFRS. This is communicated by posters throughout the building explaining what to do if there is a fire In their block, annual letters posted through each resident's door and are provided with a copy of the evacuation strategy on sign up.

4.5 Staff Training

FCHO have in place a training matrix to ensure Building safety culture is widespread across the organisation and that each employee does their part to ensuring the safety of its residents. Staff training gives FCHO staff the knowledge required to identify building safety issues, either raised by residents while carrying out work in their homes or what they spot while on our sites. This training provides clarity on what to do, how to report so a member of the correct team can deal with any issues identified.

5.0 Future plans to improve resident engagement

On successfully obtaining a Building Assessment Certificate from the Building Safety Regulator (anticipated Spring 2026) safety cases will be shared with our residents so we can demonstrate and evidence how we are keeping our residents safe.

Improvements are being built into our systems to report weekly on tenancy changes and vulnerability marker changes (due March 2026). This reporting will

allow FCHO to more quickly assess customers and ensure vulnerability information is in real time.

Ongoing project with FCHO internal ICT teams around getting resident engagement strategies included in the digital sign-up process. This will ensure residents are made aware of the strategy when signing up to a FCHO HRB flat. Until this project is complete any new residents will have a copy of this strategy posted through their door.

Appendix A – Example HRB engagement quarterly summery report

HRB RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT QUARTERLY SUMMARY REPORT (April 25 – Feb 26)	
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1.0

Face to face engagement

Annual face to face engagement includes:
Resident discussions around building safety concerns, Fire door checks, sprinkler checks, EVAC checks, detection checks, vulnerability data collection

HRB	Complete since 1 st April	Required by 31 st March	Percentage complete
Vale House	37	40	92.50%
Vale House	62	70	88.57%
Vale House	64	68	94.12%
Vale House	62	62	100.00%
Totals	225	240	93.75%

Comments: Appointments are now been individually targeted to the final 15 tenants, with expectation to achieve 100% by year end

2.0

Resident concerns and feedback

As part of our face to face visits we asks residents to confirm they know how to report a building safety issue, we also ask them if they have any building safety concerns currently. Where concerns are raised we either resolve on site by providing the necassary information / assurance or take it away to be delay with

Address	Concern raised	Action	Feedback to resi- dent
Various Vale House	Non resident en- tering block	Escalate to ASB team	Security patrols put in place and communicated to residents
113 Vale House	Concerns over combustibles been left within common areas	Provided assur- ance on site that daily caretaker rounds would clear the waste	Provided on site

	68 Vale	ASB issue with kids burning things	Sent to ASB team	Advised resident on site this will be sent to ASB team
	24 Vale	Kids smoking within block	Sent to ASB team	Advised resident on site this will be sent to ASB team
3.0	<u>Communication activity log (outside annual visits)</u>			
	June 2025	Fire safety advice (annual FRA letter)	Providing fire safety information and evacuation advice	
	July 2025	Informing resident on BAC	Letter issued to all resident informing them of the BSR decision on the BAC application and what it means	
	Jan 2026	CVP – Resident engagement strategy	CVP – feedback saved in C:\Users\alex.swift\OneDrive - First Choice Homes Oldham\Shared Documents - PropertySafety\Fire\Fire\Communications\Resident engagement strategy\Consultations	
	Feb 2026 (in progress)	Winter fire safe campaign	Find out more about the Winter Fire Safe campaign	
	Feb 2026 (in progress)	Charge safe campaign	Visit the Charge Safe campaign webpage	
	Feb 2026 (in progress)	national Fire Kills campaign	Read more about the Fire Kills campaign	
	Feb 2026 (in progress)	Boot warmer awareness	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy8y4qxd15wo	
	Ongoing	Building safety Page	Monthly updates of Building safety webpage applicable to each HRB	
	Ongoing	Building safety messaging on digital screen in foyer	Ongoing building safety information is displayed within the foyer	